

# **Hurricane Harvey Response 2017**

## **Community Liaison (CL) Plan**

### **OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this plan is to lay out the deployment of up to 50 Community Liaisons within south Texas as the state recovers from the damage and hazards resulting from the Hurricane. There are numerous drinking water and wastewater treatment plants that are not functioning or are still unsafe. Many areas have been flooded resulting in mold and other environmental hazards. It is the role of the CLs to help the community understand what resources are available to help them in being as safe as possible.

### **GOAL OF THE CLs**

The goal of the Community Liaison is to ensure citizens are as knowledgeable as possible on staying safe from environmental hazards considering the circumstances they are presented with at the time. The Community Liaison should be able to educate and disseminate information that is pertinent to floodwater safety, drinking water concerns and other environmental considerations.

### **ROLE OF THE CLs**

CLs will be tasked to perform the following:

1. Coordinate with large stores for distribution of information on well disinfection, locations/times of water testing events, precautions for flood waters, mold remedies.
2. Distribute information in neighborhoods directly to citizens to inform them of resources available.
3. Help staff water events where citizens can bring samples from their residential private wells for testing.
4. Work with staff from other agencies supporting the effort to maximize use of resources.

### **RESOURCES OF INFORMATION**

Mold, Children's Health, & Lead Based Paint.

<https://www.epa.gov/natural-disasters/flooding#recover>

From the TCEQ website on disinfecting private wells:

<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/gi/gi-432.html>

Add information on taking residential drinking water samples

(Decision has been made to provide sample bottles. These will be packaged in a large Ziploc bag with gloves and instructions of how to take and transport the sample)

Need to add information on hazards of flood or standing waters. **Does this work as a start?**

### **Flood and Standing Waters**

Flood and standing waters contain many hazards, including bacteria and other contaminants. Precautions should be taken by anyone involved in cleanup activities or any others who may be exposed to flood and standing waters. These precautions include heeding all warnings from local and state authorities regarding safety advisories. In addition to the drowning hazards of wading, swimming, or driving in swift floodwaters, these waters can carry large objects that are not always readily visible that can cause injuries to those in the water. Other potential hazards include downed power lines and possible injuries inflicted by animals displaced by the floodwaters.

Standing waters can increase mosquito population. Control mosquitoes outside your home by removing standing water where mosquitoes could lay eggs.

Learn (<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/prevent-mosquito-bites.html>) how to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites.

Mosquitoes and Hurricanes <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/vector/mosquitoes-and-hurricanes.html>

## **INITIAL TRAINING FOR MOBILIZED CLs**

The following topics will be discussed with the CLs on the morning before they are deployed out from the Command Post.

- Top Line Talking Points
- Roles to be performed
- Safety briefing
- Tips while in the neighborhoods
- Education on the topics to be disseminated:
  - o Mold
  - o Standing/Flood water safety tips
  - o Disinfection of private wells
  - o Private Well Water Sample Testing
  - o Contact information for issues outside of EPA's purview

## **INFORMATION ROLLOUT**

Messaging to be sent out will be disseminated in the most efficient manner possible.

1<sup>st</sup> – Social Media will be used to reach those that are able to be connected. (Facebook, Twitter)

2<sup>nd</sup>—Look at Public Service Announcements on local radio/tv stations

3<sup>rd</sup>—Print flyers to be attached to cleaning kits, at checkout counters of appropriate stores (Home Depot, Target, etc)

4<sup>th</sup>—Print flyers to be distributed in highly damaged neighborhoods without water or electricity (assuming fewer people there would be connected electronically)

## **WE WANT YOU TO BE SAFE!**

### **Cautions for Community Liaisons**

Decrease the risk of mosquito and other insect bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and by using insect repellants.

Always mobilize in groups of 2 or 3 or more. Never go to a neighborhood or impacted area alone.

### **Tips to Remember**

- Consider all water unsafe until local authorities announce that the public water supply is safe.
- Cover all non-intact skin such as cuts and open wounds with a waterproof bandage.
- Do not use contaminated water to wash and prepare food, brush your teeth, wash dishes, or make ice.
- Keep an adequate supply of safe water available for washing and potable water for drinking.
- Be alert for chemically contaminated floodwater at industrial sites.
- Use extreme caution with potential chemical and electric hazards, which have great potential for fires and explosions. Floods have the strength to move and/or bury hazardous waste and chemical containers far from their normal storage places, creating a risk for those who come into contact with them.
- If the safety of a food or beverage is questionable, throw it out.
- Seek immediate medical care for all animal bites.
- Be aware of possible structural damage in your work area. Floods may have caused hidden damage to roadways, bridges, buildings, etc. DO NOT drive through standing or moving water on roadways!

### **Signs and Symptoms**

The signs and symptoms experienced by the victims of microorganisms are similar, even though they are caused by different pathogens. These symptoms include skin rashes, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, muscle aches, and fever.

Although different chemicals cause different health effects, the signs and symptoms most frequently associated with chemical poisoning are headaches, skin rashes, dizziness, nausea, excitability, weakness, and fatigue.

### **What to do if Symptoms Develop**

If responders experiences any of the signs or symptoms listed above, appropriate first-aid treatment and medical advice must be sought. Notify your supervisor and Health & Safety Manager, and complete the necessary workers compensation and accident forms as soon as possible after seeking treatment. If the skin is broken, particularly with a puncture wound or a wound in contact with potentially contaminated material, a tetanus vaccination as well as specialized medical care may be needed. Do not hesitate to

seek medical care even if the injury is small or minor. Also, EPA requires that all exposures and injuries, no matter how small, be reported.

More information will be provided to you in your mobilization package.